

Investigating the Impact of CPD for Teachers: short change?

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Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers can take many forms, commonly delivered within the school context and increasingly linked to academic credit. Arguably, for those in the profession seeking senior management, leadership or specialist roles within education, evidence of CPD, particularly when credit-bearing, is a necessity. In addition, Hustler et al (2003) found that teachers are seeking meaningful CPD which facilitates change not only in professional practice and school effectiveness, but, importantly, in the development of self.

Many Higher Education Institutions offer CPD as short-courses delivered in schools and Local Authorities as well as traditional postgraduate qualifications for individual teachers seeking further study and qualification. In most cases there exists a difference in funding arrangements, whilst individuals pay to undertake traditional masters-level credit by choice, school-based CPD is employer funded. This paper seeks to investigate whether self-funding makes a difference to the impact of the CPD in relation to self-development and positive change. In other words, do self-funded teachers identify more aspects of personal and professional development than those engaged in school or Local Authority provided credit-bearing CPD? Furthermore, what are the significant catalysts for change that can be identified?

The fieldwork took place within two London boroughs, using a questionnaire survey to elicit responses from both primary and secondary teachers currently participant in credit-bearing CPD ($n=18$) either self-funded at a London-based Higher Education Institution or within their Local Authority funded by their employer. Further in-depth interviews were carried out with a representative sample of the original participants ($n=6$). Using literature on school development and CPD to create an analytical framework of signifiers of both personal and professional development, the data was coded and reviewed.

The findings report positive high-impact on personal and professional development amongst teachers indentifying ownership of the CPD and a clear link to their own career, practice and understanding. As may be expected, this was most often, but not entirely, associated with those that had sought out and funded their own courses. Where CPD was highly relevant to the practice, interests and career ambitions of the individual, aspects of positive change were most clearly identified. This has significant implications for schools and Local Authorities seeking value for money in CPD.

In Stoll:

It is clearer today than ever that educators need to learn, and that's why 'professional learning' has replaced 'professional development'. Developing is not enough. Educators must be knowledgeable and wise. They must know enough in order to change. They must change in order to get different results. They must become learners. Easton, 2008:756

Individual and collective professional learning needs both have an explicit focus in studies of effective professional development (Ofsted, 2006).

Personal drivers such as life history, personal circumstances and professional life phase can affect teachers' needs at any particular time (Day et al, 2007; Grundy & Robinson, 2004), as well as learning needs, performance management and professional standards.

The quality of teachers' professional development is related to sustained opportunities to apply learning gained to their practice over an extended period of time. It's not about oneoff, brief or sporadic experiences, but rather about learning that is sustained, intensive and in-depth. (Bubb & Earley, 2009).

Offering teachers the opportunity to participate and collaborate in professional learning communities is essential to high-quality professional development (Borko, Jacobs & Koellner, 2010; Little, 2006).

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psychological factors (teacher cognition and motivation); - organisational factors (leadership, oppo)
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It might be useful here to distinguish between professional learning and professional development, which often appear distinct in theory and in practice.

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